

PART 528—NONDISCRIMINATION REQUIREMENTS

Sec.

528.1 Definitions.

528.1a Supplementary guidelines.

528.2 Nondiscrimination in lending and other services.

528.2a Nondiscriminatory appraisal and underwriting.

528.3 Nondiscrimination in applications.

528.4 Nondiscriminatory advertising.

528.5 Equal Housing Lender Poster.

528.6 Loan application register.

528.7 Nondiscrimination in employment.

528.8 Complaints.

528.9 Guidelines relating to nondiscrimination in lending.

AUTHORITY: 12 U.S.C. 1464, 2810 *et seq.*, 2901 *et seq.*; 15 U.S.C. 1691; 42 U.S.C. 1981, 1982, 3601-3619.

SOURCE: 55 FR 1388, Jan. 16, 1990, unless otherwise noted.

§ 528.1 Definitions.

As used in this part 528—

(a) *Application*. For purposes of this part, an application for a loan or other service is as defined in Regulation C, 12 CFR 203.2(b).

(b) *Savings association*. The term “savings association” means any savings association as defined in § 561.43 of this chapter other than a State-chartered savings bank whose deposits are insured by the Bank Insurance Fund.

(c) *Dwelling*. The term “dwelling” means a residential structure (whether or not it is attached to real property) located in a state of the United States of America, the District of Columbia, or the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico. The term includes an individual condominium unit, cooperative unit, or mobile or manufactured home.

[55 FR 1388, Jan. 16, 1990, as amended at 58 FR 4312, Jan. 14, 1993; 63 FR 71212, Dec. 24, 1998]

§ 528.1a Supplementary guidelines.

The Office’s policy statement found at 12 CFR 528.9 supplements this part and should be read together with this part. Refer also to the HUD Fair Housing regulations at 24 CFR parts 100 *et seq.*, Federal Reserve Regulation B at 12 CFR part 202, and Federal Reserve Regulation C at 12 CFR part 203.

[63 FR 71212, Dec. 24, 1998]

§ 528.2 Nondiscrimination in lending and other services.

(a) No savings association may deny a loan or other service, or discriminate in the purchase of loans or securities or discriminate in fixing the amount, interest rate, duration, application procedures, collection or enforcement procedures, or other terms or conditions of such loan or other service on the basis of the age or location of the dwelling, or on the basis of the race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (having one or more children under the age of 18), marital status, age (provided the person has the capacity to contract) or national origin of:

(1) An applicant or joint applicant;

(2) Any person associated with an applicant or joint applicant regarding such loan or other service, or with the purposes of such loan or other service;

(3) The present or prospective owners, lessees, tenants, or occupants of the dwelling(s) for which such loan or other service is to be made or given;

(4) The present or prospective owners, lessees, tenants, or occupants of other dwellings in the vicinity of the dwelling(s) for which such loan or other service is to be made or given.

(b) A savings association shall consider without prejudice the combined income of joint applicants for a loan or other service.

(c) No savings association may discriminate against an applicant for a loan or other service on any prohibited basis (as defined in 12 CFR 202.2(z) and 24 CFR part 100).

NOTE: See also, § 528.9 (b) and (c).

[55 FR 1388, Jan. 16, 1990, as amended at 63 FR 71212, Dec. 24, 1998]

§ 528.2a Nondiscriminatory appraisal and underwriting.

(a) *Appraisal*. No savings association may use or rely upon an appraisal of a dwelling which the savings association knows, or reasonably should know, is discriminatory on the basis of the age or location of the dwelling, or is discriminatory per se or in effect under the Fair Housing Act of 1968 or the Equal Credit Opportunity Act.

(b) *Underwriting*. Each savings association shall have clearly written, nondiscriminatory loan underwriting

standards, available to the public upon request, at each of its offices. Each association shall, at least annually, review its standards, and business practices implementing them, to ensure equal opportunity in lending

NOTE: See also, § 528.9(b), (c)(6), and (c)(7).

[55 FR 1388, Jan. 16, 1990, as amended at 63 FR 71212, Dec. 24, 1998]

§ 528.3 Nondiscrimination in applications.

(a) No savings association may discourage, or refuse to allow, receive, or consider, any application, request, or inquiry regarding a loan or other service, or discriminate in imposing conditions upon, or in processing, any such application, request, or inquiry on the basis of the age or location of the dwelling, or on the basis of the race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (having one or more children under the age of 18), marital status, age (provided the person has the capacity to contract), national origin, or other characteristics prohibited from consideration in § 528.2(c) of this part, of the prospective borrower or other person, who:

- (1) Makes application for any such loan or other service;
- (2) Requests forms or papers to be used to make application for any such loan or other service; or
- (3) Inquires about the availability of such loan or other service.

(b) A savings association shall inform each inquirer of his or her right to file a written loan application, and to receive a copy of the association's underwriting standards.

NOTE: See also, § 528.9(a) through (d).

[55 FR 1388, Jan. 16, 1990, as amended at 63 FR 71212, Dec. 24, 1998]

§ 528.4 Nondiscriminatory advertising.

No savings association may directly or indirectly engage in any form of advertising which implies or suggests a policy of discrimination or exclusion in violation of title VIII of the Civil Rights Acts of 1968, the Equal Credit Opportunity Act, or this part 528. Advertisements, other than for savings, shall include a facsimile of the following logotype and legend:



§ 528.5 Equal Housing Lender Poster.

(a) Each savings association shall post and maintain one or more Equal Housing Lender Posters, the text of which is prescribed in paragraph (b) of this section, in the lobby of each of its offices in a prominent place or places readily apparent to all persons seeking loans. The poster shall be at least 11 by 14 inches in size, and the text shall be easily legible. It is recommended that savings associations post a Spanish language version of the poster in offices serving areas with a substantial Spanish-speaking population.

(b) The text of the Equal Housing Lender Poster shall be as follows:



We Do Business In Accordance With Federal Fair Lending Laws.

UNDER THE FEDERAL FAIR HOUSING ACT, IT IS ILLEGAL, ON THE BASIS OF RACE, COLOR, NATIONAL ORIGIN, RELIGION, SEX, HANDICAP, OR FAMILIAL STATUS (HAVING CHILDREN UNDER THE AGE OF 18) TO:

[] Deny a loan for the purpose of purchasing, constructing, improving, repairing or maintaining a dwelling or to deny any loan secured by a dwelling; or

[] Discriminate in fixing the amount, interest rate, duration, application procedures, or other terms or conditions of such a loan or in appraising property.

§ 528.6

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, YOU SHOULD:

SEND A COMPLAINT TO:

Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC 20410.

For processing under the Federal Fair Housing Act

AND TO:

Director, Consumer Affairs, Office of Thrift Supervision, Washington, DC 20552.

For processing under Office of Thrift Supervision Regulations.

UNDER THE EQUAL CREDIT OPPORTUNITY ACT, IT IS ILLEGAL TO DISCRIMINATE IN ANY CREDIT TRANSACTION:

[] On the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, sex, marital status, or age;

[] Because income is from public assistance; or

[] Because a right has been exercised under the Consumer Credit Protection Act.

IF YOU BELIEVE YOU HAVE BEEN DISCRIMINATED AGAINST, YOU SHOULD SEND A COMPLAINT TO:

Director, Consumer Affairs, Office of Thrift Supervision, Washington, DC 20552.

§ 528.6 Loan application register.

Savings associations and other lenders required to file Home Mortgage Disclosure Act Loan Application Registers with the Office of Thrift Supervision in accordance with 12 CFR part 203 must enter the reason for denial, using the codes provided in 12 CFR part 203, with respect to all loan denials.

[58 FR 4312, Jan. 14, 1993]

§ 528.7 Nondiscrimination in employment.

(a) No savings association shall, because of an individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin:

(1) Fail or refuse to hire such individual;

(2) Discharge such individual;

(3) Otherwise discriminate against such individual with respect to such individual's compensation, promotion, or the terms, conditions, or privileges of such individual's employment; or

(4) Discriminate in admission to, or employment in, any program of apprenticeship, training, or retraining, including on-the-job training.

(b) No savings association shall limit, segregate, or classify its employees in any way which would deprive or tend

12 CFR Ch. V (1-1-01 Edition)

to deprive any individual of employment opportunities or otherwise adversely affect such individual's status as an employee because of such individual's race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

(c) No savings association shall discriminate against any employee or applicant for employment because such employee or applicant has opposed any employment practice made unlawful by Federal, State, or local law or regulation or because he has in good faith made a charge of such practice or testified, assisted, or participated in any manner in an investigation, proceeding, or hearing of such practice by any lawfully constituted authority.

(d) No savings association shall print or publish or cause to be printed or published any notice or advertisement relating to employment by such savings association indicating any preference, limitation, specification, or discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, or national origin.

(e) This regulation shall not apply in any case in which the Federal Equal Employment Opportunities law is made inapplicable by the provisions of section 2000e-1 or sections 2000e-2 (e) through (j) of title 42, United States Code.

(f) Any violation of the following laws or regulations by a savings association shall be deemed to be a violation of this part 528:

(1) The Equal Employment Opportunity Act, as amended, 42 U.S.C. 2000e-2000h-2, and Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) regulations at 29 CFR part 1600;

(2) The Age Discrimination in Employment Act, 29 U.S.C. 621-633, and EEOC and Department of Labor regulations;

(3) Department of the Treasury regulations at 31 CFR part 12 and Office of Federal Contract Compliance Programs (OFCCP) regulations at 41 CFR part 60;

(4) The Veterans Employment and Readjustment Act of 1972, 38 U.S.C. 2011-2012, and the Vietnam Era Veterans Readjustment Adjustment Assistance Act of 1974, 38 U.S.C. 2021-2026;

(5) The Rehabilitation Act of 1973, 29 U.S.C. 701 *et al.*; and

(6) The Immigration and Nationality Act, 8 U.S.C. 1324b, and INS regulations at 8 CFR part 274a.

§ 528.8 Complaints.

Complaints regarding discrimination in lending by a savings association shall be referred to the Assistant Secretary for Fair Housing and Equal Opportunity, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Washington, DC 20410 for processing under the Fair Housing Act, and to the Director, Consumer Affairs, Office of Thrift Supervision, Washington, DC 20552 for processing under Office regulations. Complaints regarding discrimination in employment by a savings association should be referred to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Washington, DC 20506 and a copy, for information only, sent to the Director, Consumer Affairs, Office of Thrift Supervision, Washington, DC 20552.

§ 528.9 Guidelines relating to non-discrimination in lending.

(a) *General.* Fair housing and equal opportunity in home financing is a policy of the United States established by Federal statutes and Presidential orders and proclamations. In furtherance of the Federal civil rights laws and the economical home financing purposes of the statutes administered by the Office, the Office has adopted, in part 528 of this chapter, nondiscrimination regulations that, among other things, prohibit arbitrary refusals to consider loan applications on the basis of the age or location of a dwelling, and prohibit discrimination based on race, color, religion, sex, handicap, familial status (having one or more children under the age of 18), marital status, age (provided the person has the capacity to contract), or national origin in fixing the amount, interest rate, duration, application procedures, collection or enforcement procedures, or other terms or conditions of housing related loans. Such discrimination is also prohibited in the purchase of loans and securities. This section provides supplementary guidelines to aid savings associations in developing and implementing nondiscriminatory lending policies. Each savings association should reexamine its underwriting

standards at least annually in order to ensure equal opportunity.

(b) *Loan underwriting standards.* The basic purpose of the Office's non-discrimination regulations is to require that every applicant be given an equal opportunity to obtain a loan. Each loan applicant's creditworthiness should be evaluated on an individual basis without reference to presumed characteristics of a group. The use of lending standards which have no economic basis and which are discriminatory in effect is a violation of law even in the absence of an actual intent to discriminate. However, a standard which has a discriminatory effect is not necessarily improper if its use achieves a genuine business need which cannot be achieved by means which are not discriminatory in effect or less discriminatory in effect.

(c) *Discriminatory practices*—(1) *Discrimination on the basis of sex or marital status.* The Civil Rights Act of 1968 and the National Housing Act prohibit discrimination in lending on the basis of sex. The Equal Credit Opportunity Act, in addition to this prohibition, forbids discrimination on the basis of marital status. Refusing to lend to, requiring higher standards of creditworthiness of, or imposing different requirements on, members of one sex or individuals of one marital status, is discrimination based on sex or marital status. Loan underwriting decisions must be based on an applicant's credit history and present and reasonably foreseeable economic prospects, rather than on the basis of assumptions regarding comparative differences in creditworthiness between married and unmarried individuals, or between men and women.

(2) *Discrimination on the basis of language.* Requiring fluency in the English language as a prerequisite for obtaining a loan may be a discriminatory practice based on national origin.

(3) *Income of husbands and wives.* A practice of discounting all or part of either spouse's income where spouses apply jointly is a violation of section 527 of the National Housing Act. As with other income, when spouses apply jointly for a loan, the determination as to whether a spouse's income qualifies for credit purposes should depend upon

a reasonable evaluation of his or her past, present, and reasonably foreseeable economic circumstances. Information relating to child-bearing intentions of a couple or an individual may not be requested.

(4) *Supplementary income.* Lending standards which consider as effective only the non-overtime income of the primary wage-earner may result in discrimination because they do not take account of variations in employment patterns among individuals and families. The Office favors loan underwriting which reasonably evaluates the credit worthiness of each applicant based on a realistic appraisal of his or her own past, present, and foreseeable economic circumstances. The determination as to whether primary income or additional income qualifies as effective for credit purposes should depend upon whether such income may reasonably be expected to continue through the early period of the mortgage risk. Automatically discounting other income from bonuses, overtime, or part-time employment, will cause some applicants to be denied financing without a realistic analysis of their credit worthiness. Since statistics show that minority group members and low- and moderate-income families rely more often on such supplemental income, the practice may be racially discriminatory in effect, as well as artificially restrictive of opportunities for home financing.

(5) *Applicant's prior history.* Loan decisions should be based upon a realistic evaluation of all pertinent factors respecting an individual's creditworthiness, without giving undue weight to any one factor. The savings association should, among other things, take into consideration that:

(i) In some instances, past credit difficulties may have resulted from discriminatory practices;

(ii) A policy favoring applicants who previously owned homes may perpetuate prior discrimination;

(iii) A current, stable earnings record may be the most reliable indicator of credit-worthiness, and entitled to more weight than factors such as educational level attained;

(iv) Job or residential changes may indicate upward mobility; and

(v) Preferring applicants who have done business with the lender can perpetuate previous discriminatory policies.

(6) *Income level or racial composition of area.* Refusing to lend or lending on less favorable terms in particular areas because of their racial composition is unlawful. Refusing to lend, or offering less favorable terms (such as interest rate, downpayment, or maturity) to applicants because of the income level in an area can discriminate against minority group persons.

(7) *Age and location factors.* Sections 528.2, 528.2a, and 528.3 of this chapter prohibit loan denials based upon the age or location of a dwelling. These restrictions are intended to prohibit use of unfounded or unsubstantiated assumptions regarding the effect upon loan risk of the age of a dwelling or the physical or economic characteristics of an area. Loan decisions should be based on the present market value of the property offered as security (including consideration of specific improvements to be made by the borrower) and the likelihood that the property will retain an adequate value over the term of the loan. Specific factors which may negatively affect its short-range future value (up to 3-5 years) should be clearly documented. Factors which in some cases may cause the market value of a property to decline are recent zoning changes or a significant number of abandoned homes in the immediate vicinity of the property. However, not all zoning changes will cause a decline in property values, and proximity to abandoned buildings may not affect the market value of a property because of rehabilitation programs or affirmative lending programs, or because the cause of abandonment is unrelated to high risk. Proper underwriting considerations include the condition and utility of the improvements, and various physical factors such as street conditions, amenities such as parks and recreation areas, availability of public utilities and municipal services, and exposure to flooding and land faults. However, arbitrary decisions based on age or location are prohibited, since many older, soundly constructed homes provide housing opportunities which may

be precluded by an arbitrary lending policy.

(8) *Fair Housing Act (title VIII, Civil Rights Act of 1968, as amended)*. Savings associations, must comply with all regulations promulgated by the Department of Housing and Urban Development to implement the Fair Housing Act, found at 24 CFR part 100 *et seq.*, except that they shall use the Equal Housing Lender logo and poster prescribed by Office regulations at 12 CFR 528.4 and 528.5 rather than the Equal Housing Opportunity logo and poster required by 24 CFR parts 109 and 110.

(d) *Marketing practices*. Savings associations should review their advertising and marketing practices to ensure that their services are available without discrimination to the community they serve. Discrimination in lending is not limited to loan decisions and underwriting standards; a savings association does not meet its obligations to the community or implement its equal lending responsibility if its marketing practices and business relationships with developers and real estate brokers improperly restrict its clientele to segments of the community. A review of marketing practices could begin with an examination of an association's loan portfolio and applications to ascertain whether, in view of the demographic characteristics and credit demands of the community in which the institution is located, it is adequately serving the community on a nondiscriminatory basis. The Office will systematically review marketing practices where evidence of discrimination in lending is discovered.

[54 FR 49666, Nov. 30, 1989, as amended at 60 FR 66870, Dec. 27, 1995. Redesignated at 63 FR 71212, Dec. 24, 1998]

PART 535—PROHIBITED CONSUMER CREDIT PRACTICES

Sec.

535.1 Definitions.

535.2 Unfair credit practices.

535.3 Unfair or deceptive cosigner practices.

535.4 Late charges.

535.5 State exemptions.

AUTHORITY: Sec. 18, as added by sec. 202, 88 Stat. 2193, as amended (15 U.S.C. 57a).

SOURCE: 54 FR 49479, Nov. 30, 1989, unless otherwise noted.

§ 535.1 Definitions.

(a) *Act*. For the purposes of this part, "Act" means the Federal Trade Commission Act, 15 U.S.C. 41 *et seq.*

(b) *Consumer*. The term "consumer" means a natural person who seeks or acquires goods, services, or money for personal, family, or household purposes, and who applies for or is extended "consumer credit" as defined in § 561.12 of this chapter.

(c) *Cosigner*. The term "cosigner" means a natural person who assumes liability for the obligation of a consumer without receiving goods, services, or money in return for the obligation, or in the case of an open-end credit obligation, without receiving the contractual right to obtain extensions of credit under the account. The term shall include any person whose signature is requested as a condition to granting credit to a consumer, or as a condition for forbearance on collection of a consumer's obligation that is in default. The term shall not include a spouse or other person whose signature is required on a credit obligation to perfect a security interest pursuant to state law. A person is a cosigner within the meaning of this definition whether or not he or she is designated as such on a credit obligation.

(d) *Creditor*. The term "creditor" means a savings association.

(e) *Debt*. The term "debt" means money that is due or alleged to be due from one to another.

(f) *Earnings*. The term "earnings" means compensation paid or payable to an individual or for his or her account for personal services rendered or to be rendered by him or her, whether denominated as wages, salary, commission, bonus, or otherwise, including periodic payments pursuant to a pension, retirement, or disability program.

(g) *Household goods*. The term "household goods" means clothing, furniture, appliances, linens, china, crockery, kitchenware, and personal effects of the consumer and his or her dependents, provided that the following are not included within the scope of the term "household goods":

(1) Works of art;

(2) Electronic entertainment equipment (except one television and one radio);